

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TGEN, MARR, SP
SUBJECT: JOINT COMMITTEE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: SPANISH PROCEDURES
FOR COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL SELECTION.

1. SPANISH AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP REPRESENTING THE TECHNICAL
MINISTRIES MET WITH FONOFF REPS JUNE 3 AND EVOLVED A FORMULA
FOR ALLOCATING FUNDS AND RANK-ORDERING PROPOSALS WHICH DOES
CONSIDERABLE VIOLENCE TO THE CONCEPT OF OPEN COMPETITION
IMPLEMENTED BY THE PUBLIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS EMANATING FROM
THE COMISION ASESORA OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

2. 52 PROPOSALS FROM 8 MINISTRIES WERE RECEIVED BY THE
APRIL 30 DEADLINE, WITH A TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED EXCEEDING
\$12 MILLION. NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITHIN THE SPANISH
GOVERNMENT ON HOW THESE SHOULD BE REANKED OR BY WHAT GROUP.
A COMPROMISE PLAN WAS WORKED OUT JUNE 3, WHICH RECOGNIZES
THE INABILITY TO DECIDE THE ISSUE ON ITS MERITS. THIS
PLAN, WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT HOLD UP SINCE THE AD HOC GROUP
DOES NOT HAVE OFFICIAL STATUS, WORKS AS FOLLOWS:

A) APPROXIMATELY 82PERCENT OF THE TOTAL FY77 FUND OF \$6,400,000
IS TO BE ALLOCATED TO COOPERATIVE RESEARCH SUPPORT,
IN LINE WITH THE AGREEMENT MADE AT THE JOINT
COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 16. APPROXIMATELY 70PERCENT OF
THIS ALLOCATION IS TO BE APPLIED TO THOSE PROPOSALS

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SUBMITTED ORIGINALLY BY APRIL 30 WHICH THE JOINT
COMITTEE MAY APPROVE. THE REMAINING 30PERCENT IS RESERVED
FOR THE SUPPORT OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BETWEEN MAY 1
AND JUNE 30 AND SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED.

B) IN AN ATTEMPT TO PUT AN END TO INTERMINISTERIAL
DISAGREEMENTS, THE AD HOC GROUP FIRST AGREED TO
ELIMINATE THREE SMALL AND IMPERFECT PROPOSALS, ONE

EACH FROM THE MINISTRIES OF AIR, LABOR AND INTERIOR.
THE FIVE MINISTRIES REMAINING IN COMPETITION
(EDUCATION & SCIENCE, COMMERCE, PUBLIC WORKS,
INDUSTRY, AND AGRICULTURE) AGREED, AD REFERENDUM
THEIR MINISTRIES' HIGHER AUTHORITIES, TO DIVIDE
THE 70PERCENT RESERVED FOR THE FIRST ROUND EQUALLY AMONG
THE FIVE MINISTRIES, APPROXIMATELY \$733 THOUSAND
EACH.

C) EACH MINISTRY IS NOW REWORKING ITS ORIGINAL
PACKAGE OF SUBMISSIONS SO THAT THE TOTAL REQUESTED
DOES NOT EXCEED ITS SHARE. SOME PROPOSALS WILL
BE WITHDRAWN, WHILE OTHERS WILL BE REWRITTEN AND
THEIR BUDGETS REDUCED. THIS PROCESS IS SUPPOSED TO
BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR A DECISION MEETING ON
JUNE 13 OF THE AD HOC GROUP WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY
REPS.

D) THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL SEND THE RESULTS OF THIS
SELECTION PROCESS TO THE EMBASSY BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE
ABOUT JUNE 16, FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE U.S. SIDE.

3. COMMENT: IF THIS SYSTEM HOLDS, THE U.S. SIDE
WOULD RECEIVE FIVE SETS OF PROPOSALS WHICH WE WOULD
HAVE TO EVALUATE IN TERMS OF OUR OWN INTERESTS AND
POLICIES. IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLY THAT IN SOME
CASES WE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE COUNTERPROPOSALS, IN
DEFENSE OF THE INTERESTS OF SOME OF OUR TECHNICAL
AGENCIES. IN OTHER CASES, SUCH AS PROPOSALS FOR
BASIC OR OTHER (IN THIS CONTEXT) LOW PRIORITY
RESEARCH IN WHICH THE U.S. COOPERATING INSTITUTION
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IS A UNIVERSITY, WE MIGHT HAVE TO RECOMMEND
RECONSIDERATION. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF COMPETITION
FOR FUNDS ON THE BASIS OF MERIT ALONE IS THE MOST
SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE OF THIS NEW SPANISH APPROACH
TO SELECTION. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REPS. ARE
FULLY AWARE OF THIS BUT PREFER TO STAY OUT OF THE
INTERMINISTERIAL BATTLE. IN A SENSE, THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY IS PASSING THE BUCK TO OUR SIDE. STABLER

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